



SMALLPOX VACCINE INFORMATION STATEMENT (VIS):

IMPORTANT INTERIM SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION -- MARCH 27, 2003

SMALLPOX VACCINE AND HEART PROBLEMS

There is evidence that suggests that smallpox vaccination may cause cases of heart inflammation (myocarditis), inflammation of the membrane covering the heart (pericarditis), and a combination of these two problems (myopericarditis). Experts are exploring this more in-depth.

Heart pain (angina) and heart attack have also been reported following smallpox vaccination. However, it is not known if smallpox vaccination caused these problems or if they occurred by chance alone (heart problems are very common). Experts are investigating this question also.

Reported events are not necessarily caused by the vaccine, and some or all of these events might be coincidental.

As a precautionary step, people who have been diagnosed by a doctor as having heart disease with or without symptoms should not receive smallpox vaccine at this time while experts continue their investigations. These include conditions such as:

- **previous myocardial infarction (heart attack)**
- **angina (chest pain caused by lack of blood flow to the heart)**
- **congestive heart failure**
- **cardiomyopathy**

These may be temporary exclusions and may change as more information is gathered.

The presence of these conditions in a close contact is not a reason to defer vaccination.

Anyone who has received the smallpox vaccine should see a health care provider right away if they develop chest pain, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of cardiac disease after vaccination.

Anyone who has been diagnosed by a doctor as having heart disease and has already received the smallpox vaccine should contact their heart disease specialist or their regular health care provider if they have questions.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/smallpox, or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY).